

Madam Chair

To: ~~Chairman~~ Arntzen and members of the Business and Labor Committee:

I am Bob Adams, resident of Helena and a member of Montana Conservation Voters.

Thanks for this moment to urge you to **vote against SB 159**, a bill to revise the State Building Code.

This bill says it will make new buildings more energy efficient and make them more affordable. It will do neither.

The bill requires the adoption of only energy standards which will pay back purchase and installation cost within the first five years.

Achieving that short-term payback is an extreme and unrealistic expectation. The National Association of Homebuilders recommends a ten (10) year payback. Consequently, we would be setting up Montana with less efficient new buildings...homes and commercial... with a bill which promotes ~~energy efficiency~~ for current and long-term energy efficiency. *does NOT*

This may be a "relief bill" for the spec home contractor anxious to get a product out on the market at a seeming bargain of several thousand dollars under the price of a builder who installed more efficient (and more expensive) insulation, building methods, heating and lighting systems. **But what about the first buyers and the subsequent buyers...or users...of the building?** Buyers are looking for an energy efficient investment in these times of limited resources and consequent rising energy costs.

"Affordability" sought in Section 1, Objective 7 of this bill should be over the longer term. It is a given that, to retrofit an inefficient home is much more costly than building it efficiently to begin with. Inefficiency, which this bill promotes, affects the budgets of all Montanans, especially the poor, as a huge proportion of their income goes to energy costs. And what about renters? No incentive for a landlord building a new duplex or apartment to make it energy efficient. After all, the hapless tenants are stuck with the utility bills. An unintended consequence gives this bill an "anti-tenant" cast.

We all generally recognize in our economic lives that a "cheap deal" to get into is often NOT a good deal over the long term. We have each experienced the consequences of cheap items in all product lines: they don't perform, and they don't last.

This bill sets up a cheap front-end building cost without considering the true "affordability" of the building for owners or renters, **over time**. It is not a "jobs" bill...unless you consider two jobs for the homeowner trying to pay utility bills...or jobs that the the homeowner creates doing an expensive energy efficiency retrofit.

Don't lower our efficiency standards...do encourage efficient and long-term affordable buildings: vote NO on SB 159.

Thank you.